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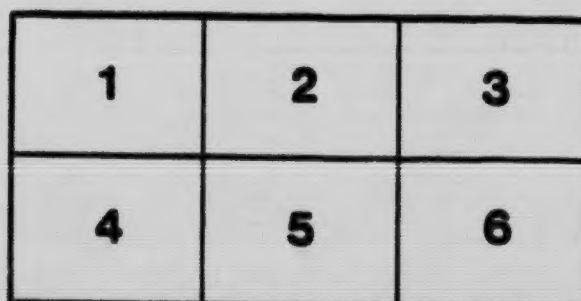
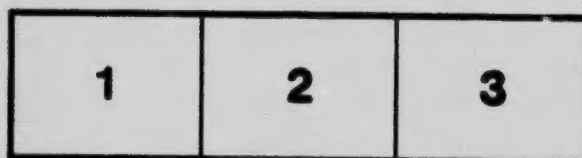
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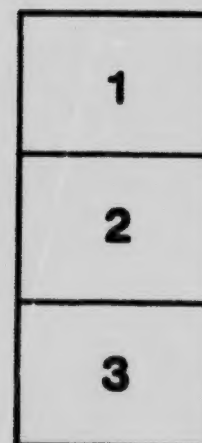
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ON THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA
SERIES III 1919 VOLUME XIII

Lord Lovel and Lady Nancy
A Traditional Ballad

W. J. Wintenburg

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Lord Lovel and Lady Nancy; a Traditional Ballad

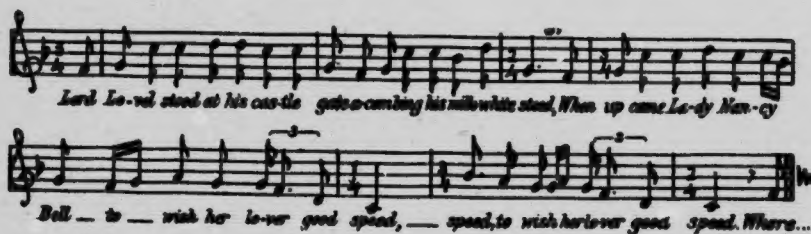
By W. J. WINTENBERG

Presented by LAWRENCE J. BURPEE, F.R.S.C.

Read May Meeting, 1919

Although in the United States the collection of folk ballads has been carried on for some time, the Canadian field has until recently been neglected. That there is abundant material in Canada has been shown by Mr. C. M. Barbeau's large collections from both French and English-speaking Canadians.

So far only one version of "Lord Lovel," a traditional ballad handed down orally in Great Britain, probably for several centuries, has been recorded in Canada. It was recited to us by Mrs. Katherine H. Wintenberg, who learned it from an old woman, when a child, near Nenagh, Grey county, Ontario.

a THE CANADIAN VERSION¹

Lord Lovel stood at his castle-gate
A-combing his milk-white steed,
When up came Lady Nancy Bell
To wish her lover good speed, speed,
To wish her lover good speed.

"Where are you going, Lord Lovel?" she said,
"Where are you going?" said she,
"I'm going away, Lady Nancy Bell,
Strange countries for to see, see,
Strange countries for to see."

"When will you be back, Lord Lovel?" she said,
"When will you be back?" said she.
"In a year or two or three, at the most,
I'll return to my fair Nancy, cy,
I'll return to my fair Nancy."

¹ The melody was recorded and transcribed by C. M. Barbeau.



He had not gone but a year and a day,
 Strange countries for to see,
 When anguishing thoughts came into his mind,
 Lady Nancy Bell he would see, see,
 Lady Nancy Bell he would see.
 He rode and he rode on his milk-white steed
 Till he came to London town,
 And there he saw the church-steeple top,
 And the people all mourning round, round,
 And the people all mourning round.
 "Oh, what is the matter?" Lord Lovel he said,
 "Oh, what is the matter?" said he.
 "A lord's lady is dead," a woman replied,
 "And come call her Nancy, cy,
 And come call her Nancy."
 He ordered her grave to be opened wide,
 The shroud to be turned down,
 And there he kissed her clay-cold lip,
 Till the tears came trickling down, down,
 Till the tears came trickling down.
 Lady Nancy died, as it might be, to-night;
 Lord Lovel died as to-morrow.
 Lady Nancy died of pure, pure grief;
 Lord Lovel died of sorrow, sorrow,
 Lord Lovel died of sorrow.
 Lord Lovel was laid in St. Bernard's church;
 Lady Nancy was laid in the choir.
 And out of her bosom there grew a red rose;
 And out of her lover a brier, brier,
 And out of her lover a brier.
 They grew and grew to the church-steeple top,
 Where they could grow no higher;
 And there entwined in a true lover's knot,
 For all true lovers to admire, mire,
 For all true lovers to admire.

b ENGLISH AND AMERICAN VARIANTS

With the exception of a few minor differences, it is substantially the same as version *H*¹ of Francis Child's monumental collection of *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.² Child's sources for his variant *H* are a London broadside in Dixon's *Ancient Poems*³ and Davidson's *Universal Melodist* (I, 148).

The most marked differences between our variant and that of Child's are to be found in 5 and 9. Child's fifth stanza:

¹ Part III, p. 211.

² Published in five volumes of two parts each, Boston, 1882-1898.

³ *Ancient Poems, Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England*, p. 78, Percy Society, Vol. XIX.

"So he rode and he rode, on his milk-white steed,
Till he came to London town,
And there he heard St. Pancras bells,
And the people all mourning round."

In the ninth stanza, Lady Nancy—not Lord Lovel—is laid in the church, and he "was laid in the choir."

Several versions of Child's variant *H* have been independently recorded in the United States. Three are given by Phillips Barry, in his "Traditional Ballads in New England,"¹ which differ but slightly from *H*, the third being a mere fragment. "St. Pancras bells" become "St. Patrick's bells" in Barry's *A*, stanza 5, line 3. The first lines of stanza 9, are entirely different:

"They buried them both in St. Patrick's churchyard,
In a grave that was close by the spire."

In Barry's *A* 2, stanza 1, line 1, Lord Lovel "stood by his garden gate," instead of the usual "castle gate."

H. M. Belden² has published two variants (*a* and *b*)³ in his "Old Country Ballads in Missouri." Compared with ours, Belden's versions offer some differences. Lord Lovel replies to Lady Nancy:⁴

"I'm going to travel this wide world round,
Strange countries for to see."

Stanza 5, the second last line:

"But when he came to his native city
He found the people mourning round."

Stanza 8:

"Lady Nancy she died as it were to-day,
Lord Lovel he died to-morrow;
Lady Nancy was laid in St. Peter's churchyard,
Lord Lovel was laid in the choir."

Stanza 9, the first lines of which do not occur in any other recorded version:

"And there they laid for many a year,
And there they laid, these two"

¹ *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XVIII, 1905, pp. 291-293.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XIX, 1906, pp. 284-285.

³ Belden's *B* does not differ much from Barry's *A*.

⁴ Stanza 2, lines 3 and 4.

In a variant¹ from the Southern Appalachians, Lord Lovel² (as in Barry's *A* 2)

" . . . was at his gate side
A-carrying his milk-white steed."

It includes a stanza that may have been borrowed from some other ballad:

"Go dig my grave," Lord Lovel he said;
"Go dig my grave," says he.
"For I have no longer in this world to stay,
For the loss of my Lady Nancy."

Child gives nine other variants of "Lord Lovel,"³ in which many important divergences from our version may be noticed.

In variant *A*, apparently the earliest printed record,⁴ the name of Lord Lovel's lady love is "Ouncebell." The name "Ounceville" occurs in *C*, "Oonzabel" in *E*, "Isabell" in *G*, and "Anzibell" in *J*. These are mere perversions of the same original name.

The name "Lovel" also undergoes some modifications in spelling. Thus, in *C*, it is "Travell," and in *G*, "Revel." In *B*, a variant from Scotland, the name naturally becomes "*Lavel*."

From other variants we learn that the Nancy Bel' of our version was more than a mere Lady—she was a king's daughter.

The lines, in two of Child's variants:

"Dey down, dey down, dey down dery down,
I wish Lord Lovill good speed!"

and

"Hey down, hey down, hey derry, hey down!" etc.,

are also to be noticed.⁵

The stanza of variant *B*, in which the grief-stricken lover cries,

"O hast thou died, Fair Nancybelle,
O hast thou died for me!
O hast thou died Fair Nancybelle!
Then I will die for thee,"

does not occur in any other known ballad of the Lord Lovel type.

¹ *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, comprising 122 songs and ballads and 323 tunes. Collected by Olive Dame Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp. (New York and London, 1917.)

² This variant lacks stanza 8, and the last two stanzas.

³ Part III, pp. 207-212, and IV, p. 512.

⁴ From the "Percy Papers, communicated by the Rev. P. Parsons of Wye from singing; May 22, 1770, and April 19, 1775." (Child, Part III, p. 209.)

⁵ Variant *A*, Stanza 4, line 3, and Stanzas 2 and 4, line 3 of Variant *E*.

In variant *E* (stanza 8, lines 3-4) Lord Lovel,

" . . . drawing for h his rapier bright,
Through his own heart did it run."

This, Child thinks, "should, perhaps, be considered as taken from 'Lord Thomas and Fair Annet,' since in no other copy of 'Lord Lovel' and in none of 'Fair Margaret and Sweet William' does the hero die by his own hand."¹

Now turning again to our version, let us notice a few of the more interesting features. As in most ballads of the "Lord Lovel" set, it opens with Lord Lovel

"A-combing² his milk-white steed,"³

a rather menial occupation for a courtly knight. This may suggest a plebian origin for the ballad, but it may also be due to the influence of its long enshrinement in the memory of the common people. In Child's *F*, Lord Lovel is represented as "*mounting* his milk-white steed." In all but one version (Child's *D*) the steed is of this color. Milk-white steeds are a commonplace idea in ballads.⁴ Sometimes also they are "berry-brown," or "dapple-grey," but seldom black.

In our version Lord Lovel's motive for leaving Lady Nancy Bell is "Strange countries for to see"; and it is the same in all other variants of Child's *H* and also in *D*. In Child's *B* he is

" . . . going to merry England,
To win your love aff me."

In *J*, also, he is

" . . . going unto England,
And there a fair lady to see."

¹ Part III, p. 204.

² More literally "a-currying," in the lines from the Appalachian ballad, quoted above.

³ Cf. stanza 1 of Child's variant *D* of "Child Maurice":

"Gill Morice stood in stable-door,
With red gold shined his weed;
A bonnie boy him behind,
Dressing a milk-white steed."

(Part IV, p. 268). See also

"Childe Waters in his stable stoode,
And stroaket his milke-white steed,"

(Child, "Child Waters," *A*, stanza 1, ll. 1-2; III, p. 85); and

"Lord Thomas stands in his stable-door,
Seeing his steeds kaimd down,"

(*F*, stanza 1, ll. 1-2, p. 93).

⁴ Child, Part II, pp. 339-340.

His destination is "London town" in *A* and *G*, and in *E* he

" . . . must needs be gone,
To visit the king of fair Scotland."

In the third stanza Lord Lovel promises to return "In a year or two or three at the most." This is also the time limit in all other versions of Child's *H*. In variant *I* he is to return "before six months are past," in *A* he is to be gone two years, in *G* and *J* three years, and in *B*, *C*, and *D* seven years. In all versions but *F* he returns before the expiration of the time to find that his lady-love has died of grief during his absence, and he also dies the following day; "an easily conceived tragedy," as Henderson says, "if it but seldom happens."¹

The coming back or reappearance of a lover to find that his beloved has died occurs in other European folk-songs and ballads (principally German, Scandinavian and French). The theme has been so thoroughly discussed by Child in his introduction to "Lord Lovel"² and also more briefly by the Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco in her *Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs*³ that I will merely refer to it here.

We now come to the most interesting part of the ballad, the burial of the two lovers, and, as Child says, "the beautiful fancy of plants springing from the graves . . . and signifying by the intertwining of stems or leaves, or in other analogous ways, that an earthly passion has not been extinguished by death."⁴

C. ANALYSIS OF THE THEME OF THE INTERTWINING SHRUBS.

The underlying idea of the ending in Child's *A*, *B*, *E*, *F*, and *I* is the same as in our version. The main theme, however, is not confined to ballads of the Lord Lovel type, for it also occurs in "Earl Brand," "The Douglas Tragedy," "Barbara Allen," "Fair Janet," "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet," "Fair Margaret and Sweet William," "Lady Alice" and "Prince Robert."

In all these there is quite a diversity in the places of burial. The lovers most often are buried in the church choir (or *quire*), and

¹ Henderson, T. F., *The Ballad in Literature*, (Cambridge University Press, 1912), pp. 38-39.

² Part III, pp. 204-206. Other parallels are cited in Part IV, p. 512; VI, p. 510; VIII, p. 471; IX, p. 225, and X, p. 294.

³ (London and New York, n. d., *Everyman's Library*), pp. 37-38.

⁴ Part I, p. 96.

The theme has also been discussed in *Mélusine*, IV, 60, 85, and 142, and V, 39.

sometimes in the higher or lower chancel, in the high chapel, by the church door, and "in the east" and "in the west" of the church. Often, too, they are buried "beyond Kirk wa'," in the churchyard, in the "cold" churchyard, sometimes one in one churchyard and the other in another, but rarely beside each other. In one ballad the lover is "laid in the mire." In many of the ballads the names of the churches are given: St. Bernard's—as in our version,—St. Pancras, St. Peter's, St. Patrick's, St. John's, and Marie's, Lady Mary's, or St. Mary's. It might be of interest to note that most of the ballads in which the name is given as "Marie's church" are from Scotland. These may have been influenced by "The Douglas Tragedy," which was supposed by Sir Walter Scott to be founded in some actual event.¹

The plants springing from the graves, in all these ballads, are the rose or the brier, and the birch. The roses are most frequently described as red or blood red. Lily-white roses occur in only two variants² and a green one in another,³ which last must refer to the color of the bush. They usually spring from the grave itself, sometimes from the heart or breast of one of the lovers, and grow to the "church-steeple top," or to the top of the church, where, in most instances, they twine together "in a true lovers' knot."⁴

Several ballads have an additional stanza describing the subsequent destruction of the plants. In one of these (Child's *A*), it is:

"An old wowman coming by that way,
And a blessing she did crave,
To cut off a bunch of that true lover's not
And bury them both in one grave."

In "Fair Margaret and Sweet William" we find a different form:

"Then came the clerk of the parish,
As you the truth shall hear,
And by misfortune cut them down,
Or they had now been there."⁵

¹ Scott, in a note to "The Douglas Tragedy," says "the chapel of St. Mary, whose vestiges may still be traced upon the lake, to which it has given name, is said to have been the burial place of Lord William and Fair Margaret," the hero and heroine in the tragedy. (*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Vol. III, pp. 244-245.)

² Child's "Lord Lovel" *E*, stanza 9; also in a version of "Barbara Allen," in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, XXVIII, p. 145.

³ "Lady Marget" (9), *ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴ In Child's "Lord Lovel" *I*, stanza 17,

"The tops of them grew far sundry,
But the roots of them grew neer."

⁵ Percy's *Reliques*.

The concluding verse in Child's variant *A* of "Lady Alice":

"The priest of the parish he chanced to pass,
And he severed those roses in twain;
Sure never were seen such true lovers before,
Nor e'er will there be again,"

is similar.

The ending in "The Douglas Tragedy,"

"But bye and rade the Black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough!
For he pull'd up the bonny brier,
And flang'd in St. Mary's loch,"¹

as Scott says, far surpasses the others.

In a variant of "Fair Janet" given by Child (VIII, 466) the final verse reads:

"Till by there came an ill French Lord,
An ill death may he die!
For he pu'd up the bonnie brier,
....."

See also the concluding verse of "Giles Collins," in Child VI, p. 515.

In English and Scottish ballads the sympathetic plants, as we have seen, are mainly the rose or the brier, and the birch. In continental ballads, reference is made to many more trees, shrubs or plants; but there does not seem to be a single instance of the British rose and brier or brier and birch. The folk-poet preferred the trees and flowers of his home land, in some cases because they were sacred or symbolical of purity.

Let us study the diffusion of this folk-lore theme with reference to the various plants growing from the lovers' graves. We find occurrences where: (1) there are two kinds of trees; (2) the trees or plants are of the same kind; (3) the trees or plants do not spring from the graves but are planted; or (4) a single tree or plant is mentioned.

(1) The rose does not occur as often as one would expect, in most instances being one of two trees springing from the graves. In a Breton folk-song, a tree grows from the lover's grave and a rose from the maiden's.²

¹ Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

² Child (VIII, 443) citing Luzel (Paris, 1890). Cf. also the ballad "Le Plongeur," in *Mélusine*, III, 453-454.

In a Swedish ballad, Rosea Lilla and her lover, a duke, are buried south and north, in a churchyard, and a rosebush growing from the grave of Rosea Lilla covers the grave with its leaves. The lover is then laid in her grave, and a linden springs from it.¹ A Bulgarian song speaks of a youth growing up as a rose-tree and the maid as a grape vine.² In another song from the same source it is a rose and vine. In two Croatian songs, it is also a grape-vine and a rose; the youth (in one of them) is buried behind the church and the maid before.³ In a Servian song, a red rosebush growing from one grave twines around a green fir rising from the other.⁴ A rose and a lily, in a Slovenian song, issues from the graves of two lovers, buried east and west (of a church?) and mingle their growth.⁵ In a Galician song a rose and a sage plant spring from one grave and a rosemary from the other; the flowers interlace.⁶ According to a Turkish tale, Sora Chenim goes down into the grave of Taji Pascha, which opens to receive her. The "black heathen" orders one of his slaves to kill and bury him between the two lovers. Taji Pascha grows up as a poplar, Sora Chenim as a rosebush, and the "black heathen" as a thorn.⁷ The plants are roses and canes in "Dom Diniz," a Portuguese song,⁸ and in another, "The Princess Pèlerine," roses and pines.⁹

In countries where it flourished, especially in Greece, the cypress frequently appears in folk-songs. In one case, the lovers embrace, fall dead; a cypress and a lemon-tree spring from their graves.¹⁰ It is a cypress and an apple-tree, in another.¹¹ In a song from the Peloponnesus, the lover becomes a reed, the girl becomes a cypress, and

"The reed to kiss doth bend his head, he bends to kiss the cypress."¹²

¹ Child (I, 96) citing Arwidsson (Stockholm, 1834-42).

² *Ibid.*, (VI, 498) citing Miladnov, (Agram, 1861, and Sophia, 1891). Also G. Meyer, in *Mélasine*, IV, 87.

³ *Ibid.*, (VI, 498) citing Kurelac, (Agram, 1871).

⁴ *Ibid.*, (I, 97) citing Talvj (Leipzig, 1853). Also Dyer, *The Folk-Lore of Plants*, p. 12, citing what is probably the same song; and Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (Stallybrass trans.), Vol. II, p. 327, citing Vuk, I, No. 137.

⁵ *Ibid.*, (II, 490) citing Stür, (Prague, 1853).

⁶ Karłowicz, J., *Les deux arbres entrelacés*, *Mélasine*, Paris (1890-91), Vol. V, 42.

⁷ Child (X, 285-6), quoting Radloff. (St. Petersburg, 1885-86).

⁸ *Ibid.*, (I, 97) citing Veiga. (Lisbon, 1870.)

⁹ Puymaigre, Theodore, Comte de, *Choix de vieux Chants portugais*, (Paris, 1881), pp. 16-17, citing Almeida-Garrett.

¹⁰ Child (I, 97, 200; IV, 498) citing Chasiotis and Sakellarios (Athena, 1866, 1868).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, (I, 97) citing Sakellarios.

¹² Garnett, Lucy M. J., *Greek Folk-Poetry* (Guildford, 1896), Vol. I, p. 148.

A mother, in another Greek song, poisons her son's wife and he kills himself,

"And there where buried they the youth, grew up a tall green cypress;
And there where buried they the maid, a reed grew, tall and slender.
The pliant reed doth bend its head, and kisses it the cypress.
Then when the *skyla* mother saw, whose jealousy had slain them—
'Ah see! [said she] the unhappy ones, see those who loved so fondly!
If they, when living, never kissed, dead, they may kiss each other!'"

Child (I, 97) cites other Greek songs in which cypresses and reeds spring from graves. In one of these the reeds and trees bend toward one another "and kiss whenever a strong breeze blows."

In the Portuguese ballad of "Count Nello," the king, who had forbidden the marriage of the count and the Infanta, orders the count to be beheaded. The count is buried near the porch of the church and the Infanta at the foot of the altar. From one springs a cypress, from the other an orange-tree, and their branches join and kiss. The king has the trees cut down, noble blood flows from the cypress, from the orange-tree blood royal, and from one flies forth a dove, from the other a wood-pigeon. They perch before the king at his table, and he cries, "Ill luck upon their fondness, ill luck upon their love! Neither in life nor in death have I been able to divide them."

The cypress in Russian ballads is also one of the trees. In one, Vasily, the lover, is laid on the right and Sophia on the left (of the church?), and from their graves grow a golden willow and a cypress. The trees are destroyed by the hostile mother.¹

The same kind of trees occur in a different Russian song; and in another, it is a silver willow and a cypress.²

In a Neapolitan-Albanian ballad, a youth is killed and the beloved girl dies. Both are covered up with stones; from the youth comes up a cypress, and from the damsel a vine, which clasps the cypress.³ This also occurs in another song of the same people, "but inappropriately, as Liebrecht has remarked, fidelity in love being wanting in this case."

¹ Garnett, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

² Child (III, 206).

³ Puymaigre, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48; and Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco *op. cit.* Child (I, 97) cites Almeida-Garrett (Lisbon, 1863), Braga (Coimbra, 1867), and Hartung (Leipzig, 1877).

⁴ Child (IV, 498) citing Bessonof (Moscow, 1861-4).

⁵ *Ibid.*, (II, 489) citing Hilferding (St. Petersburg, 1873).

⁶ *Ibid.*, (I, 94, 97) citing de Rada.

⁷ *Ibid.*, (I, 97) citing Camarda.

In a Roumanian ballad a fir and a vine grow from the graves and meet over the church.¹ From the youth, according to a Servian text, grows a pine and from the maid a grape-vine.² The vine twines around the pine, in a Servian song.³

In Bulgaria, a song mentions a poplar growing from the girl's grave and a pine from her lover's.⁴

Several instances are to be found in Portuguese songs: in "Dom Doardos," it is an olive and pine trees;⁵ in "A Ermida no Mar," it is a clove-tree and a pine; in "Filha Maria," it is a tree and pines;⁶ in another song, a clump of pine trees grows over the grave of the knight and reeds on the grave of the princess. Though cut down, these plants grow again and are heard sighing in the night.⁷

It is a green maple and white birch, in a Russian song, the maple springing from the man who is buried under the church and the white birch from the woman buried under the belfry.⁸ In the following Little-Russian ballads: (1) a maple growing from the man's grave and a white birch from the woman's mingle their leaves;⁹ (2) the lovers are buried apart and a green plane tree grows from his grave and two birches from hers (but the branches do not interlace);¹⁰ (3) the lover is buried on one side of the church and the maiden on the other. On his grave grows a rosemary, on hers a lily, and they both grow so high that they meet over the roof of the church. The girl's mother cuts them down, and the lover, speaking from the grave, upbraids her with the words: "Wicked mother, thou wouldst not let us *live* together; let us rest together;"¹¹ (4) the lovers are buried apart in the church, and the same kinds of shrub grow from their graves.¹²

A rosemary and a white flower are spoken of in a Croatian song.¹³

The lovers, according to a Hungarian ballad, are buried, one before the altar and the other behind. White and red lilies grow

¹ Child (I, 97) citing Alecxandri (Bucharest, 1886-7); Stanley (Hertford, 1856), and Murray (London, 1859).

² *Ibid.*, (VI, 498) citing Vuk (Berlin, 1854).

³ *Ibid.*, citing Krasic (Pantchevo, 1880).

⁴ *Ibid.*, (VIII, 443) citing *Collection of the Bulgarian Ministry of Instruction*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, (I, 97) citing Braga (Porto, 1869), also Hartung.

⁶ *Ibid.*, (I, 97).

⁷ *Ibid.*, citing Almeida-Garrett.

⁸ *Ibid.*, (IV, 498) citing Trudy (St. Petersburg, 1872-77).

⁹ *Ibid.*, (II, 490) citing Golovatsky.

¹⁰ Karlowicz in *Mélusine*, V, 40, citing Kolberg (Cracow, 1882-1889).

¹¹ Child (II, 489), citing Golovatsky. See also Karlowicz, *op. cit.*, 40.

¹² *Ibid.*, (VIII, 443) citing Holovatsky.

¹³ *Ibid.*, (VI, 498) citing Kurelac.

from their tombs; and the mother (or father) of one of the lovers wants to destroy the plants.¹

In the French song of "Les deux amoureux," lavender and a tree grow from the graves.²

In the song "Le due tombe," from Piedmont, one of the lovers is buried in the church and one outside. A pomegranate springing from the man's grave and an almond-tree from the girl's grow large enough to shade three cities.³ In version *D* of the same song, an almond-tree grows from the man's grave and a jessamine from the maid's.

In a Russian song, from the cossack's grave issues a thorn, and an elder from that of the maid. The cossack's mother goes to pull up the thorn and cries, "Lo! this is no thorn; it is my son!" The girl's mother goes to pluck the elder and exclaims, "Lo! this is no elder; it is my daughter!" both mothers being inimical.⁴

From the grave mound of a girl, in an ancient Romansch ballad, grows a camomile plant, from that of her lover a plant of musk, and the plants twine together and embrace.⁵

(2) Often the same kind of tree springs from each grave. Thus, in the Gaelic tale, the lovers Deirdre and Naois, are buried on either side of a loch; fir shoots grow from their graves and unite in a knot above the loch. Twice these shoots are cut down by the king's order, but each time they grow again; the king's wife then intercedes and the third time they are allowed to unite in peace.⁶

An old Cornish tradition (cited by Folkard) describes how "Iseult, unable to endure the loss of her betrothed . . . died broken-hearted, and was buried in the same church; . . . by order of the king, their graves were placed far asunder. But soon from the grave of Tristan came forth a branch of ivy, and from the tomb of Iseult there issued another branch. Both gradually grew upwards, until at last the lovers, represented by the clinging ivy, were again united beneath the vaulted roof of the sanctuary."⁷

¹ Child (I, 98) citing Aigner.

² *Ibid.*, (VIII, 443) citing Daymond (Cahors, 1889).

³ *Ibid.*, (VI, 498, Version A) citing Nigra (Turin, 1888). Also "Fior di Tomba", (No. 19, in the same collection) in which there is only one grave, large enough to contain the maid's parents, her lover and herself; see also the fragments *E*, *F*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, (IV, 408) citing Trudy.

⁵ Martinengo-Cesaresco, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

⁶ Jacobs, Joseph, *Celtic Fairy Tales* (New York and London, n. d.), p. 91. The original of this story is given in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, XIII, p. 257. The translation, which is Jacobs' source, appeared in the *Celtic Magazine*, XIII, p. 69, *et seq.*

⁷ Folkard, Richard, Jr., *Plant Lore* (London, 1884), p. 389.

In the Breton ballad, "The Lord Nann and the Fairy" two oaks rise from the tomb of a man and his wife the night after their burial.¹

Two Swedish ballads speak of a linden growing from each of two graves, made east and west of the church; the trees meet over the church roof.²

Two rose-bushes spring from the graves, in a Danish song.³ In others, the plants are lilies, and, in one instance, they interlock over the roof of the church.⁴

In a Norwegian ballad, the lovers are buried north and south of the church, and lilies grow from their graves, over the roof.⁵

In three variants of the German song "Der Ritter und die Maid," the lovers are buried in one grave; three pinks spring from this grave, three lilies from another, and two lilies from a third.⁶

In a Spanish ballad, two olive trees (*olivera y oliverá*) come from the grave, and join when grown tall.⁷

Two pines spring from a grave, in a Portuguese ballad.⁸

In a Servian song, the two intertwining trees are pines.⁹

Karłowicz cites a Little-Russian ballad in which plane trees grow from the graves.¹⁰

In "Mem and Zin," a Kurdish poem of 1652-53, two rose bushes grow on the graves of two lovers, the branches of which intertwine.¹¹

Haxthausen gives an outline of an Armenian poem in which the fire of passion glows so intensely within two reunited lovers that at last it bursts into flames and they are burnt to ashes, which are collected by some friendly hand and buried in one grave, from which at length spring up and blossom two rose bushes with their branches inclining toward one another and seeking to unite, "but a thorny branch," growing up between them, separates them forever.¹²

¹ Taylor, Tom, *Ballads and Songs of Brittany*, (translated from the *Barsas Bries* of Vicomte H. de Villemarqué (Paris, 1867), (London and New York, n.d.). Also cited by Child (II, p. 379, 489).

² Child (I, 96) citing Arwidsson (Stockholm, 1834-42), and Wigström.

³ *Ibid.*, (I, 96) citing *Danske Viser*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, (I, 96 and VIII, 443) citing Kristensen.

⁵ *Ibid.*, (I, 96) citing Landstad (Christiana, 1853).

⁶ *Ibid.*, (I, 97—Nicolai and Kretschmer—, I, 96-97—Uhland, Simrock, Erk, Hoffman and Richter).

⁷ *Ibid.*, (II, 489), citing Milá.

⁸ *Ibid.*, (VI, 498) citing Romero (Lisbon, 1883).

⁹ *Ibid.*, (II, 489) citing Karadahitch.

¹⁰ Karłowicz in *Mélusine*, IV, 88, citing *Zbior wiado.* (Cracow, 1877.)

¹¹ Child (I, 98) citing *Bulletin de la classe des Sciences historiques . . . de St. Pétersbourg*.

¹² Difference of creed.

¹³ Haxthausen, Baron von, *Transcaucasia* (London, 1854), p. 351.

In a Kirghiz story, quoted by Bronevsky,¹ from the graves of two lovers, spring two willows "which mingle their branches as if in an embrace."

In a Chinese legend, King Kang had a secretary named Hanpang, whose beautiful wife he coveted. He threw Hanpang into prison, and his wife threw herself from a high terrace. Disregarding the wishes expressed in a letter discovered in her bosom after her death, the king had her interred in a grave separated from her husband. The same night two cedars sprang from the graves, and in ten days had grown tall and vigorous, while their branches and roots interlaced. The cedars were henceforth called "The trees of faithful love."²

In several ballads and romances, the kind of trees or plants is not specified. An Icelandic ballad and an Icelandic saga, for instance, mention two trees which spring from the bodies of Tristan and Isolde—buried on opposite sides of a church—and meet over the church roof.³

According to a Hungarian ballad, the lovers throw themselves into a deep lake, plants rise above the water and intertwine. The bodies are brought up by divers and buried in the church where the marvel occurs again.⁴

A mother, in a White-Russian song, in attempting to poison her son's wife, poisons her son also. They are buried separately, one in the church, one in the graveyard. Trees from their graves join their tops.⁵

A Ruthenian song differs from the last only in this: the two lovers are buried on different sides of the church; and the mother while trying to cut down the plants, which meet over the church, is turned into a pillar.⁶

An Afghan song tells how two trees spring from the remains of the lovers Audan and Doorkhaunee who have been buried at some distance from each other, and the branches mingle over the tombs.⁷

(3) We will now consider instances where the two trees or shrubs have been planted on the graves. In the German romances of Tristan,

¹ Cited by W. R. S. Ralston, *Russian Folk-Tales* (London, 1873), p. 232, note.

² Gubernatis, A. de, *La Mythologie des Plantes*, II, p. 53, from Schlegel's *Uranographie chinoise*, p. 679.

³ Child (I, 98) citing several authors (from 1854 to 1885).

⁴ *Ibid.*, (I, 98) citing Aigner, *op. cit.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, (X, 295) citing different authors.

⁶ *Ibid.*, (VI, 498) citing Hermann.

⁷ Elphinstone, Hon. Mountstuart, *An Account of the Kingdom of Cabul* (Second edition, London, 1819), Vol. I, p. 297.

King Mark plants a grape-vine over Tristan and a rose over Isolde,¹ and their roots grow down into the hearts of the lovers and the stems twine together.²

Brewer (*Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, sub voce "Ysolde"), says that the lovers were buried in one grave and the rose-bush and the vine which were planted on it "intermingled their branches as they grew up that no man could separate them."

In a Servian ballad, a rose is planted on the grave of the maiden and a vine on the man's, and these embrace as if they were the lovers.³

A thorn and an olive, according to a Norman ballad, are planted over the graves, the thorn embraces the olive,⁴ and the wood of these trees is used to build a church.

In a version of "Le due Tombe," an Italian song, a pomegranate is planted on the man's grave and a hazel on the other.⁵ According to another version of the same song, an almond tree, planted on the girl's grave, is cut down.

The Wends have a song in which a maiden, before killing herself after the death of her lover, orders two grape vines to be planted on their graves. The vines intertwine.⁶

Child, citing some Russian songs in which the trees appear to have been planted, is not altogether clear. For instance, he says "laburnum" over Basil and cypress over Sophia, which intertwine.⁷ The others cited in the same note may also have been planted.⁸

In a White-Russian song the lover is buried in the church and the maid in the ditch. A plane and a linden are planted on their graves, the plane pierces the wall of the church and embraces the linden.⁹ A green oak and a white birch are planted on the graves of two lovers who have been buried one in and the other near the church. The trees touch.¹⁰

¹ Ulrich von Thürheim, vv. 3546-50, and Heinrich von Freiberg, vv. 6819-41 (in von der Hagen's edition of Gottfried of Strasbourg's *Tristan*), according to Child (I, p. 98), wrongly make the king plant the rose over Tristan and the vine over Isolde.

² Child (I, 98) citing Eilhart von Oberg (Strasbourg and London, 1877), Büsching and von der Hagen (Berlin, 1809).

³ *Ibid.*, (II, 489) citing Karadschitsch (Berlin, 1854).

⁴ Puymaigre, *op. cit.*, p. 189, citing Beaurepaire (Avranches and Paris, 1856).

⁵ Child (VI, 493) citing Nigra.

⁶ *Ibid.*, (I, 97) citing Haupt and Schmalzer (Grimma, 1841, 1843).

⁷ Corrected to silver willow in Part IV, p. 498.

⁸ Child (II, 489) citing Hilferding, (St. Petersburg, 1873).

⁹ Karłowicz, *op. cit.*, 39, citing a MS.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, citing *Zbior wiad.* etc. (Cracow, 1889).

In a German song a young man feigns death and when his love approaches he springs up and kisses her. "She falls dead with fright, and he declares that since she has died for him he will die for her. So they are buried severally at one and the other side of the church, and two lily stocks are planted, which embrace 'like two real married people.'"¹

A white and a red tulip are planted on the graves of the lovers, in the Hungarian song of the "Two Princes." Their souls pass into the tulips.²

The Irish-Gaelic story of Naisi and Deirdre may be cited here, although the trees were not really planted. King Conor causes the lovers to be buried far apart, but for some days the graves are found open in the morning and the lovers together. The king orders stakes of yew to be driven through the bodies, so that they are kept asunder. Yew trees grow from the stakes, and so high as to embrace each other over the cathedral of Armagh.³

(4) Sometimes a single tree or plant springs from the lovers' graves. A few of these, especially lilies, may appear as a sign of innocence and purity, of which Hartland cites a number of instances.⁴

We find an example in Rusticien de l'uisse's prose romance of Tristan. A green brier issues from Tristan's tomb, mounts to the roof of the chapel, then descends and enters Isolde's tomb. King Mark causes it to be cut down three times, but the next morning it is as flourishing as ever.⁵

In another mediæval romance, we are told that King Mark lays the lovers within a chapel above which he sets a statue of Ysonde, and from Sir Tristan's grave grows an eglantine which twines about the statue. As in the French prose romance, the plant is cut down three times, but it grows again and ever winds about the image.⁶

Child cites a Middle High-German poem, from a manuscript of the end of the fourteenth century, in which a vine is said to have risen from the common grave of Pyramus and Thisbe and descends into it again.⁷

¹ Child (Part II, p. 506) citing Schröder (Vienna, 1869).

² *Ibid.*, (I, 98) citing Aigner.

³ Gaidoz, H., *Le Suicide, Mélusine*, IV, 12, citing *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Dublin*, I, 133, 1808.

⁴ *The Legend of Perseus* (London, 1894), Vol. I, p. 199.

⁵ Scott's *Minstrelsy*, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

⁶ Cox, George W., and Jones, E. H., *Popular Romances of the Middle Ages* (London, 1871), p. 267.

⁷ Child (II, 490) citing Köhler.

In a Breton ballad, a *fleur-de-lis* springs from a common tomb, even after it is plucked.¹

According to the Italian song "Il Castello d'Oviglio," a single pomegranate springs from the grave, at the maid's feet.²

In German ballads, the plants often are lilies. A maid is buried in the churchyard; her knightly lover under a gallows, and from his grave grows a lily bearing the inscription: "Both are together in heaven."³

Finally, the English ballad of "Giles Collins" says:

"A lily grew out from Giles Collin's grave
Which touched Lady Annie's breast."⁴

CONCLUSION

I have shown that the geographical distribution of the main theme is very wide, that it is found among many different nationalities, and that it occurs not only in the folk-ballads but also in the tales of the people.

It is difficult and even impossible to determine whether the concept of the sympathetic plants originated in one or several definite centres from which it spread by diffusion through Europe and parts of Asia. But even if it did originate in several centres it would still probably require centuries for its general distribution in any one area. Those examples in which the lovers are buried in a church or churchyard, being confined to Europe where christianity more generally prevailed, might be grouped together as having a common origin. And the others without church or churchyard, possibly all originating among non-christian people, such as the Afghans, Kurds, Kirghiz, etc., would form another group.

The theme appears very old and was perhaps old when it was incorporated into the different romances of Tristan and Isolde.⁵ It occurs in Kurdistan in the sixteenth century and it may have been an old and well-known theme, even then, in that part of the world.

Possibly the theme in most of the ballads of the Celtic, Teutonic, Scandinavian and Latin races, is derived from these early Tristan romances. Sir Walter Scott suggests that the verses in English and

¹ Child (I, 97) citing Luzel.

² *Ibid.*, (VI, 498) citing Ferraro (Turin and Florence, 1875).

³ *Ibid.*, (I, 97) citing *Wunderhorn* (Berlin, 1857), and Mittler (1855 and 1865).

⁴ *Ibid.*, VI, p. 515, Stanza 5, lines 3 and 4.

⁵ The metrical one composed by Gottfried of Strasbourg has been definitely assigned to the end of the twelfth century.

Scottish ballads embodying this theme are probably so derived,¹ but Child thinks this is a somewhat hasty assumption, and that the question as to the priority of romances or ballads is an open one.² We can be reasonably certain, that these romances, in their turn, were founded on earlier oral traditions.

The idea underlying all these examples seems to be that the trees or plants are, as Hartland thinks, "merely the lovers transformed."³ It may also be due to "the old superstition of the soul embodying itself in a tree above the grave,"⁴ just as, in a Ukrainian song, the rose above a young man's grave is regarded as his soul.⁵ Classical mythology is full of such transformations of human beings into plants; for instance, the story of Narcissus.

As to the ballad of "Lord Lovel" itself, independent of the theme, we do not know when it originated, or whether the original one was founded on any actual event or not. The earliest copy, "Lady Ouncebell," known to exist, was "communicated by singing" in the year 1770, and it may easily be several centuries older. Our version may be derived more directly from an early broadside, now lost. It is of interest to note in this connection that most of the "Lord Lovel" ballads collected in the United States are of the same type as Child's *H* and our version. Probably they were transmitted to America through the medium of broadsides rather than through oral transmission.

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¹ *Minstrelsy*, Vol. II, p. 128.

² Part I, p. 98.

³ Hartland, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

⁴ Henderson, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁵ Puymaigre, *op. cit.*, p. 189, citing Chodzko, p. 30.